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# Congress of the United States

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## SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERALISM AND THE CENSUS Congressman Michael R. Turner, Chairman



### OVERSIGHT HEARING STATEMENT BY MICHAEL R. TURNER, CHAIRMAN

Hearing topic: ***"Life In The Big City: What is Census Data Telling Us About Urban America and Are Policymakers Really Listening?"***

**Tuesday, May 10, 2005**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building**

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#### OPENING STATEMENT

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Welcome to the Subcommittee's oversight hearing entitled "Life In The Big City: What is Census Data Telling Us About Urban America and Are Policymakers Really Listening?" The Subcommittee will review Census Bureau surveys that collect demographic and economic data pertaining to urban areas and how that data is applied to urban planning.

Federal, state and local policy makers are faced with the daunting task of delivering various programs and services to the citizens they represent. County and city departments need to zone for new residences, develop new public works projects, plan transportation infrastructures, ensure health care services, and locate new schools. As a former mayor, I recognize the challenges American cities face today.

Metropolitan areas, including those with low population growth, are rapidly changing in their demographic composition. In most cities ethnic profiles are shifting, poverty is becoming more decentralized, the suburbs are aging, and commutes are lengthening. Accurate demographic and economic data are necessary to understand local trends so that policymakers can adequately manage and plan the various services they offer. The social welfare of our citizens rests in large part on the ability of government officials, as well as public interest groups and local communities, to meet these challenges with informed policies. How and to what degree policymakers apply census data determines how effective the programs are. Further, coordination among neighborhoods, cities, counties, and regions promises smart financing, successful planning, smooth adjustments to change, and fewer challenges in the future. Undeniably, those that utilize the information provided by the Census Bureau will outperform those who rely on guesswork.

Proper urban planning involves consideration of the area's economic base and population demographics. The Census Bureau provides such essential information through periodic censuses and ongoing surveys. The new American Community Survey (ACS) provides long-form characteristic data annually. Additionally, the Bureau is developing new data products to support decision-makers through the Longitudinal Employer/Household Dynamics (LEHD) Program, which produces regularly updated workforce job and location indicators for each partner state.

I am eager to hear from our first panel about these programs. We welcome remarks from the Honorable Charles Louis Kincannon, Director of the U.S. Census Bureau and Deputy Assistant Secretary Thomas Dowd of the Employment and Training Administration at the U.S. Department of Labor.

Our second panel of witnesses fully recognizes and will discuss the importance of census data for near and long-term planning. First, we will hear from Mr. Marc Morial, President of the National Urban League. Second, we will hear from Mr. Paul Farmer, the Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the American Institute of Certified Planners and the American Planning Association. Third, we will hear from Mr. Mitchell Silver, the Deputy Director of Long-range Planning in the District of Columbia's Office of Planning. Finally, we will hear from Dr. Audrey Singer, a fellow that focuses on immigration issues at the Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy of the Brookings Institution.

I look forward to the expert testimony our distinguished panel witnesses will provide today. Thank you all for your time today and welcome.

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